



**MEETING SUMMARY
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
UPPER EAST COAST WATER SUPPLY PLAN (Plan)
REGIONAL WORKSHOP
South Florida Water Management District
USDA-ARS-US Horticultural Research Laboratory
2001 South Rock Road, Fort Pierce, FL 34945
November 7, 2003**

Attendees:

Lennart Lindahl – Chairman of UECWSP and SFWMD Governing Board Member

WRAC Members:

Doug Bournique	Joe Collins	Patrick Hayes
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WRAC Alternates:

Thomas Bausch	John Mitnik	Fred Rapach
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Interested Parties:

Bob Bangert	Tom Hill	Paul Millar
Clyde Dulin	David Hoot	Gary Nemeth
Doug Dycus	Laurie Hurner	Marion Parsons
David Elam	Julie Jennison	Max Quackenbos
Margientes Engel	Steve Lamb	Donna Smith
Sharon Fauver	Joan Lawrence	Ron Smola
Darla Fousek	Linda McCarthy	Ariane Standley
Mary Ann Gosa	Bess McKinney	Richard Stenberg
Craig Hauschico	Scott Kneer	Bob Ulevich
Kathleen Higgins	Bruce McLeod	Kristi Yanchis
Helen Hickman	Michael Minton	

SFWMD Staff:

Scott Burns	Michelle Pearcy	Rick Smith
Renee DeSantis	Beth Ross	Michael Voich
Mark Elsner	Patti Sime	Pat Walker
David Gilpin-Hudson	Karen Smith	
John Mulliken	Keith Smith	

1. Welcome and Introductions by Len Lindahl, Chairman, Upper East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan Committee and SFWMD Governing Board Member.

He called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Chairman Lindahl asked all attendees to introduce themselves and state their affiliation.

Announcements by Chairman Lindahl: He welcomed Rick Smith, as the new WRAC coordinator for the SFWMD. He went on to announce there will be a groundbreaking ceremony today for the 10 Mile Creek Critical Restoration Project.

Chairman Lindahl announced upcoming dates for WRAC Meetings, Issues Workshops, Governing Board Meetings, and upcoming conferences and symposiums.

2. **Action Items from Previous Workshop by Chairman Lindahl.** Mr. Lindahl stated the action items from the September 18 workshop makeup today's agenda.

3. **Overview of Process for Plan Update, Mark Elsner, Lead Engineer, Water Supply Department, SFWMD.**

Mr. Elsner presented the Plan Update Process chart and highlighted future meetings:

- Status report to WRAC on December 4, 2003
- Status report to Governing Board on December 11, 2003
- Workshop 5 will be held on January 21, 2004 to discuss recommendations

Mr. Elsner stated the update process is going to rely more on electronic distribution of information rather than U.S. Mail. He reviewed slides of the website established for the 2004 Update. He asked if the current e-mail system is working for all the stakeholders and it was agreed that information is being distributed an effective manner. The site will continually be updated to include draft documents; workshop information including presentations, handouts, meeting summaries and agendas; and other associated information. The 2004 Plan Update site is located at www.sfwmd.gov/org/wsd/wsp/uecwsp.

4. **Loxahatchee River Restoration by Patricia Walker, Lead Planner, Planning & Development; and Patti Sime, Director, Upper East Coast Division; and Michael Voich, Project Manager, Northern District Restoration.**

Patricia Walker presented a brief history of District activities concerning the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. Background information on the early activities from the 1930s to date was provided. Recent activities include the:

- 2001 Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) North Palm Beach County, Part 1, Project Implementation Report;
- 2002 Governing Board Acceptance of the Northern Palm Beach County Comprehensive Water Management Plan; Loxahatchee River Restoration Plan development initiated; purchased 31,500 acre feet of storage in the L-8 Reservoir;
- 2003 established Minimum Flow Rule for the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River; construction of G-160, Loxahatchee Slough Structure started; and design of G-161 Northlake Blvd. Structure started.

A map showing the Northern Palm Beach County Comprehensive Water Management Plan, plus the L-8 Reservoir was presented.

Future commitments and activities on the Minimum Flow and Level (MFL) Rule requirements are:

- By 2004 establish an initial water reservation for the Loxahatchee River
- By 2006 review and revise the MFL and associated recovery plan for the Northwest Fork
- By 2007, establish MFLs for tributaries to the Northwest Fork – Loxahatchee Slough, Cypress Creek, Kitching Creek and Hobe Grove Ditch

Upcoming plans were presented, including construction of the Northern Plan projects. The District and FDEP will be working together to develop a practical restoration goal and plan for the Loxahatchee River Watershed; continue development of the CERP North Palm Beach County Part 1 Project Implementation Report; update the Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan by December 2005; and update the Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan by June 2004.

Patti Sime presented information on the Loxahatchee River, Estuary and Watershed Restoration Plan. The process for planning process and for determining hydrologic targets was explained. The procedures determine the appropriate biological indicator species and determine their hydrologic or salinity needs. Information for determining the optimum locations for these species and establishing desired hydrographs was presented.

The five key areas of focus are:

1. Watershed Wetlands
2. River Floodplain
3. River Channel (salinity)
4. Mid-Estuary (oysters)
5. Outer Estuary (seagrass)

Ms. Sime further reviewed the watershed wetlands, floodplain forest, seagrass, and oysters.

Information of the integration of Loxahatchee River Restoration Plan with other on-going efforts was presented.

Michael Voich presented information on the CERP Project Plan for Northern Palm Beach County. He is the project manager and asked stakeholders to contact him if they have any questions. The project area extends into southern Martin County.

The project goals and objectives include capturing and storing excess water currently discharged to the Lake Worth Lagoon; improved hydrologic connections and improved the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water delivery to the Loxahatchee River and Estuary.

The presentation included information on the Everglades system; historic conditions, current system and proposed improvements.

Major project benefits were shown to be:

- Improve the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River and Estuary
- Improve Lake Worth Lagoon
- Reduce dependence for water supply on the Lake Okeechobee during periods of drought
- Reduce water lost to tide
- Improve natural areas within project boundary
- Increase water management options

Information on the current status of the L-8 Reservoir and G-160 was provided. Storage of water was discussed. The status of the project was reviewed and included the project implementation report; project delivery team meetings; and public/stakeholder workshops. The next Project Delivery Team Meeting will be on December 9, 2003 at the Clayton Hutcheson Building, Military Trail, West Palm Beach, Florida. For more information, visit the District's Everglades website at www.evergladesplan.org.

Chairman Lindahl said there is a very aggressive land acquisition program that accompanies the projects discussed today. Properties that have been purchased for the Upper East Coast region were presented. Chairman Lindahl spoke on MFLs, Recovery, Restoration, Reservations, and water storage.

A question and answer session was held. Some of the questions asked concerned the flowage of water; the southern most boundary of the watershed; consumptive use permitting (CUP); Upper East Coast drainage system; and potential shortfalls in water supply for the growing population and the environment.

Impacts from CUPs were explained by staff.

5. Demand Implications of Land Use Changes, by David Gilpin-Hudson, Sr. Supervising Planner, Water Supply Department.

Mr. Gilpin-Hudson presented information on what happens in terms of water demand when agricultural land that is converted to urban uses. Conflicting definitions of "use" were presented (withdrawal only; withdrawal minus recharge; withdrawal minus recharge to the source of withdrawal). Explanations of factors that impact agricultural and urban demand rates per acre were given. Factors that impact agricultural demand rates include crop type; irrigation system type; management practices of irrigation systems; soil type; and agronomic practices. Factors that impact urban demand rates include per capita rates, dwelling units per acre, and the urban footprint. The direction of the change in water use (increase or decrease) when agricultural areas are urbanized changes by specific example (it can either increase or decrease), and there is no sweeping generalization to be made with regard to agriculture using more or less water than urban areas that replace them. These specific changes in water demand are evaluated as part of the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process, and Mr. Gilpin-

Hudson showed two local examples of urban development causing an increase and a decrease in overall water use where agriculture was replaced by urban uses.

Question and answer session held, including questions on drainage as it relates to urbanization; and rules that govern peak flows as they apply to peak-development and post-development.

6. Finalize Plan Objectives by Mark Elsner.

Mr. Elsner led a discussion on the Goal and Objectives for the 2004 Upper East Coast Water Supply Plan. He distributed a copy of the revised goals. He stated the suggested changes received at the last workshop were incorporated into the objectives, and he wanted feedback to see if staff accurately captured the suggestions.

Comments were received: For the Other Regional Planning Efforts objective, add North and South to the IRL Restoration Feasibility Study. Another comment made was on pre- versus post- runoff and volume versus rate for surface water management. This does have to be included in the objectives.

7. Discuss Chapters 2 (Demand Estimates and Projections) and 3 (Resource Analysis) by Mark Elsner.

Mr. Elsner explained these Chapters were emailed to the participants. Copies were also distributed. Mr. Elsner and Mr. Gilpin-Hudson answered questions and provided comments on the two chapters.

Chapter 2: A request for clarification of the 10,000 acres of pasture irrigation stated in Chapter 2 was made. It was explained that IFAS personnel were consulted with and it was concluded that about 10,000 acres of pasture was irrigated on a regular basis in the planning area, even though there are many more acres of pasture. Some of the existing permitted pasture does have the capability/facilities to irrigate. It was stated there are concerns in the regulated public that if a project/demand is not specifically incorporated in the plan, it may affect the permitability of that project. Discussion of having a Public Interest Rule regarding consumptive use permitting ensued. Chairman Lindahl requested staff explore the idea of identifying “committed users” of pasture irrigation. Scott Burns, Water Supply Department, SFWMD, stated the issuance of consumptive use permits in the UEC Region is not contingent on the UECWSP. The situation in the Lower East Coast region is different in that the LEC Region is under a minimum flow and level recovery strategy. The Upper East Coast document is only a planning document. It was stated that 10,000 acres is a very small percentage of the overall pasture in the region.

Chapter 3: Mr. Elsner explained this is considered a very important chapter as it lays out the analyses to support development of the 2004 Update. He asked workshop participants for support in moving forward based on the analysis in 1998 UECWSP, and the conclusion that the projected 2025 scenario associated with 2004 Update is consistent with 1998 Plan assumptions. Participants supported this conclusion. No objections were stated.

8. Distribute Chapter 4 (Issue Identification) and Consolidated Water Supply Support Document by Mark Elsner.

Mr. Elsner explained that Chapter 4 is a critical chapter in the document in that it presents a summary of the water supply related issues in the Upper East Coast. These issues will be the focus for evaluating water sources options and developing recommendations for the Plan. A comment was made that the issues map in the chapter should include CERP information.

The Consolidated Water Supply Document will be common to all the District's water supply plans. It contains information that does not change significantly with time, like geology, water source options, and natural systems

Mr. Elsner asked the stakeholders to review the documents and be prepared to discuss them at the next UECWSP meeting scheduled on January 21, 2004.

9. Review Status of 1998 Plan Recommendations by Mark Elsner.

Mr. Elsner explained the purpose of this presentation was to summarize the recommendations in the 1998 Plan and give their implementation status, and to get the participants thinking about recommendations and strategies for the 2004 Update. He started by summarizing the issues in the 1998 Plan: expansion of Surficial Aquifer System withdrawals is limited due to potential impacts on wetlands, as well as the increased potential for saltwater intrusion; surface water availability in the C-23, C-24 and C-25 canals is limited; freshwater flow regime to St. Lucie Estuary and Indian River Lagoon; and Floridan aquifer water quality implications with increased use.

Water source options were presented. Mr. Elsner stated there are eight categories of recommendations. Information on surface water storage and the Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study and Ten Mile Creek was provided. The Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study Project Implementation Report will be finalized in 2004 and construction could begin as early as 2005. The Ten Mile Creek Project is having its groundbreaking today (November 7) and construction is estimated to be completed in 2005. A minimum flow and level in the St. Lucie Estuary has been established and the C-23 canal dredging project is nearly complete.

Mr. Elsner reviewed the Floridan aquifer recommendations. He stated the Floridan aquifer has been used by the citrus industry extensively as supplemental source during periods of deficient surface water availability, and more recently has become a vital source of water for potable water utilities. Mr. Elsner summarized Floridan well abandonment - the Floridan Aquifer Well Abandonment Program closed or rehabilitated 336 wells from 1979-1991. There were 40 additional Floridan wells closed through a District cost-share program with the NRCS from 1998-2000.

Water conservation and funding programs were discussed. The Water Savings Incentive Program, "*Water SIP*", was developed as an incentive for implementation of water conservation measures. Pat Walker is the program manager for this project and she will begin solicitation of potential projects in two weeks. The Alternative Water

Supply Grant Program offered by the SFWMD has provided \$3,180,000 to local water users in development of alternative water sources in the Upper East Coast Planning Area. Projects include reuse, development of the Floridan aquifer, and storm water reuse projects. There are three mobile irrigation laboratories in the UEC Region. From 1998 through 2002, urban and agricultural mobile irrigation laboratories have completed analysis and provided irrigation schedules that cumulatively saved approximately 8.5 million gallons a day.

Water reuse, related implementation strategies and water use rule revisions were discussed. There are several mitigation bank sites in the Upper East Coast.

Mr. Elsner said there has been real success with this Plan. The recommendations are taken very seriously.

Chairman Lindahl spoke on the Council of 100 Water Supply Report that was recently released. Mr. Lindahl acknowledged local government and agency partners in the District projects.

[Chairman Lindahl left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.]

Mr. Elsner asked everyone over the next couple of months to thoroughly review the 1998 UEC Water Supply Plan and he requested stakeholders to email recommendation concepts for the 2004 Update to him.

10. **Public Comment.** None.

11. **Wrap Up/Action Items by Len Lindahl.** Next meeting will be held on January 21, 2004 from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm at the City Hall in Stuart, Florida.

12. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Paula Moree
District Deputy Clerk